

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1977BUENOS09569

Page: 1

Channel: n/a

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 09569 152155Z
ACTION HA-05

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E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS SHUM, AR
SUBJECT DETENTION OF JACOBO TIMERMAN: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

1. SUMMARY: ADVOCATES OF THE RELEASE OF JACOBO TIMERMAN ARE RENEWING THEIR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN THE FORMER EDITORS RELEASE AS THE GOA PREPARES ITS EXPECTED CHRISTMAS AMNESTY ANNOUNCEMENTS. TIMERMAN'S RABBI, MARSHALL MEYER, MET WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA AND JUNTA MEMBER MASSERA TO MAKE A SPECIAL PLEA FOR TIMERMAN'S FREEDOM. THE LOCAL JEWISH ORGANIZATION, THE DAIA, HAS ISSUED A SPECIAL APPEAL IN THE TIMERMAN CASE. THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD HAS DONE SEVERAL PIECES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TIMERMAN CASE. FOREIGN OFFICE BASED RUMORS THAT TIMERMAN WOULD BE EXPELLED SHORTLY ARE PROBABLY OPTIMISTIC SPECULATIONS, AND IN FACT WE FEAR THAT TIMERMAN'S VERY CELEBRITY WILL WORK TO HIS DISADVANTAGE AS MILITARY HARDLINERS DIG IN THEIR HEELS.
END SUMMARY

2. VIDELA AND MASSERA MEETINGS
RABBI MARSHALL MEYER ACCOMPANIED BY TIMERMAN'S SON, HECTOR, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR CASTRO DECEMBER 10 TO DISCUSS HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA ON DECEMBER 8 AND WITH NAVY JUNTA MEMBER MASSERA ON DECEMBER 5.

3. MEYERS SCHEDULED 15 MINUTE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA
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PAGE 02 BUENOS 09569 152155Z

TURNED INTO, ACCORDING TO THE RABBI, AN 80 MINUTE SERIOUS DIALOGUE ON ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE TIMERMAN CASE. MEYER DESCRIBED OPENLY

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 1

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Griefeld, Director
Exemption(s):
☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny
Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full
() Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to
Date Declassify on Reason

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1977BUENOS09569

Page: 2

Channel: n/a

AND FRANKLY TO THE PRESIDENT THE SERIOUS ANTI-SEMITIC PROBLEMS HE SEES IN ARGENTINA. HE FOCUSSED ON THE MISUNDERSTANDING OF ZIONISM WITHIN THIS COUNTRY AS A FORM OF SUBVERSION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TIMERMAN CASE TO ARGENTINA AND WORLD JEWISH OPINION.

4. THE PRESIDENT LISTENED INTENTLY TO THE RABBIS PRESENTATION ON THE ANTI-SEMITIC PROBLEMS IN THE COUNTRY BUT VIDELAS MAJOR OBSERVATIONS WERE MADE ON THE TIMERMAN CASE. PRESIDENT VIDELA STATED THAT TIMERMAN WOULD HAVE TO CLEAR UP QUESTIONS REGARDING HIS FINANCIAL RELATIONS WHICH ARE UNDER QUESTION DUE TO HIS CLOSE CONNECTIONS WITH GRAIVER. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE HAD ASSURED SECRETARY VANCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA HAD NO REASON TO HOLD MR TIMERMAN, EXCEPT TO CLEAR UP THESE OUTSTANDING FINANCIAL QUESTIONS.

5. PRESIDENT VIDELA URGED THE RABBI TO HAVE THE TIMERMAN FAMILY BEGIN ORGANIZING HIS FINANCIAL RECORDS FOR PRESENTATION TO THE REVIEW BOARD WHICH IS JUST BEING SET UP TO INVESTIGATE THE ASSETS OF THOSE PERSONS HELD UNDER THE INSTITUTIONAL ACT. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT THE BOARD WILL BEGIN ITS WORK WITHIN 10 TO 15 DAYS AND THAT IT WOULD NOT TAKE A SUMMER RECESS. THE PANEL HAS TWO METHODS OF OPERATIONS. IT WOULD EITHER DEMAND THAT MR TIMERMAN PROVE THE REGULARITY OF CERTAIN SPECIFIC FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS OR ASK MR TIMERMAN TO ACCOUNT FOR ALL HIS ASSETS. THE PRESIDENT SUGGESTED THAT THE LATTER METHOD WOULD PROBABLY BE MORE APPROPRIATE AND ADVANTAGEOUS TO TIMERMAN. IF MR TIMERMAN IS ABLE TO SATISFY THE BOARD REGARDING THE ACQUISITION OF HIS ASSETS, HE WOULD BE FREE TO LEAVE.

6. AT MEYERS EARLIER 20 MINUTE MEETING WITH THE NAVY COMMANDER IN [REDACTED]
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PAGE 03 BUENOS 09569 152155Z

CHIEF, MASSERA INDICATED THAT THE TIMERMAN CASE WAS INEXPLICABLE. HE REITERATED THAT HE PERSONALLY HAD VOTED AGAINST PLACING TIMERMAN UNDER THE INSTITUTIONAL ACT AND SUPPORTED TIMERMANS IMMEDIATE RELEASE. HE ADDED THAT UNFORTUNATELY THE OTHER JUNTA MEMBERS "DID NOT SEE THE CASE THE SAME WAY THAT I DID."

7. MASSERA IN RESPONSE TO RABBI MEYERS PRESENTATION REGARDING ANTI-SEMITISM IN ARGENTINA PLACED THE BLAME ON THE LACK OF CENTRAL MILITARY CONTROL WITHIN THE ARMY. MASSERA SATED, "WHO IS GOING TO GIVE ORDERS TO GENERAL MENENDEZ. EVERYONE HAS HIS OWN FIEFDOM (FEUDO) HERE".

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 2

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1977BUENOS09569

Page: 3

Channel: n/a

8. DAIA STATEMENT

SHORTLY AFTER THE DAIA'S MEETING WITH SECRETARY VANCE ON NOVEMBER 21, THIS CONSERVATIVE JEWISH GROUP ISSUED A CAREFULLY WORDED STATEMENT EXPRESSING THE WORRY AND CONCERN OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN ARGENTINA OVER THE CONTINUED IMPROSONMENT OF JACOBO TIMERMAN. THE STATEMENT RECEIVED LITTLE PUBLIC ATTENTION IN ARGENTINA, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE BUENOS AIRES HERLD. HOWEVER, THE ISSUANCE OF A PUBLIC STATEMENT BY THE DAIA IS ITSELF SIGNIFICANT AS IT REPRESENTS A DEPARTURE FROM THEIR PREVIOUS PRACTICE OF SPEAKING SELDOM AND HOPING FOR THE BEST.

9. BUENOS AIRES HERALD CAMPAIGN

THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD, WHICH HAD NOT EDITORIALIZED ABOUT THE TIMERMAN CASE FOR SOME TIME, RAN A STRONG EDITORIAL AT THE TIME OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT AND A BITING OP-ED PAGE PIECE DECEMBER 8. THE LATTER, BY THE HERALD'S POLITICAL COLUMNIST, JAMES NEILSON, COMPARED THE TIMERMAN CASE IN ARGENTINA TO THE DREYFUS CASE IN FRANCE.

10. EMBASSY COMMENT: WITH INCREASING PRESS AND INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION BEING FOCUSSED ON JACOBO TIMERMAN, HIS DETENTION IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE OF A SYMBOL. TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, THE TREATMENT ACCORDED TIMERMAN HAS COME TO REPRESENT ANTI-

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PAGE 04 BUENOS 09569 152155Z

SEMITISM AND REPRESSION IN ARGENTINA. FOR MANY IN THE MILITARY, TIMERMAN IS THE SYMBOL OF "INTELLECTUAL SUBVERSION", WHICH AS THE NAVY'S NEW SECRETARY GENERAL SAID LAST WEEK "MUST REAP WHAT IT HAS SOWN". FINDING A FACE SAVING WAY OUT OF THE TIMERMAN CASE WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE VIDELA ADMINISTRATION.
CASTRO

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Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 3

UNCLASSIFIED